

(4) calls on the Government of the Russian Federation to abide by commitments agreed to in 2014 and 2015 in the Minsk agreements.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 481—URGING THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO RECOGNIZE THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ROBERTO CLEMENTE'S PLACE OF DEATH NEAR PINONES IN LOIZA, PUERTO RICO, BY ADDING IT TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. WARREN, Mr. LUJÁN, and Ms. DUCKWORTH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

**S. RES. 481**

Whereas Roberto Clemente was a renowned baseball player born on August 18, 1934, in Carolina, Puerto Rico;

Whereas Roberto Clemente started playing for the Pittsburgh Pirates of the National League in Major League Baseball in 1955, and went on to play for them for 18 seasons, becoming a baseball legend;

Whereas Roberto Clemente won the 1960 and 1971 World Series Championships with the Pittsburgh Pirates, the 1971 World Series Most Valuable Player Award, the 1966 National League Most Valuable Player Award, 15 All Star selections (1960-1967, 1969-1972), 12 consecutive Gold Glove Awards (1961-1972), 4 National Batting Titles (1961, 1963-1965, 1967, 1969), and hit the only walk-off, inside-the-park grand slam home run in professional baseball history on July 25, 1956;

Whereas Roberto Clemente became the first Latin American ballplayer to reach 3,000 career hits on September 30, 1972;

Whereas Roberto Clemente enlisted into the United States Marine Corps in 1958, and served as an infantryman for 6 years until 1964, when he was honorably discharged;

Whereas Roberto Clemente embodied the values of a model citizen through his acts of service and humanitarian efforts toward those in need, regardless of their location;

Whereas Roberto Clemente was on his way to selflessly provide humanitarian aid to earthquake-ridden Nicaragua when he died;

Whereas the plane that Roberto Clemente was on crashed into the ocean shortly after taking off from Isla Verde International Airport/Aeropuerto Internacional de Isla Verde on December 31, 1972;

Whereas Roberto Clemente was only 38 years old when he passed away;

Whereas Roberto Clemente was the first Puerto Rican inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1973;

Whereas Buenaventura Boulevard was designated as the Roberto Clemente Memorial Roadway by the Osceola County Board of County Commissioners in 2015;

Whereas Stonewall Jackson Middle School was renamed Roberto Clemente Middle School by the Orange County School Board in September 2020;

Whereas Stonewall Jackson Road, a mile-long stretch of road off of Semoran Boulevard, was renamed for Roberto Clemente by the Orlando City Council in June 2021;

Whereas a portion of Route 21 in Newark was designated as the Roberto Clemente Memorial Highway by the New Jersey Legislature in June 2016;

Whereas the Paterson School District, the City of Paterson, and New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation inaugurated the

New Roberto Clemente Middle School in April 2005;

Whereas the Paterson School District designated an elementary school the Roberto Clemente Elementary School in September 1975;

Whereas the Newark Board of Education designated an elementary school the Roberto Clemente Elementary School;

Whereas The Roberto Clemente Little League in Branch Brook Park in Newark, New Jersey, is named in his honor;

Whereas Roberto Clemente was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Presidential Citizens Medal, and the Congressional Gold Medal for his civic and charitable contributions; and

Whereas the crash site in the adjacent area to Playa Aviones in the municipality of Loíza, Puerto Rico, was the last place where Roberto Clemente graced this world 49 years ago: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate requests that the Secretary of the Interior recognize the crash site of Roberto Clemente's airplane and the adjacent land by adding the site to the National Register of Historic Places.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 482—RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT AND THE LASTING IMPACT OF THAT ACT ON THE STATE OF ALASKA AND ALASKA NATIVE PEOPLE**

Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs:

**S. RES. 482**

Whereas the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) (referred to in this preamble as "ANCSA") was signed into law on December 18, 1971, to settle longstanding issues of Alaska Native aboriginal land claims in the State of Alaska (referred to in this preamble as the "State");

Whereas the 1970s welcomed a new era of Federal Indian policy, one of economic and self-determination, with the passage of ANCSA;

Whereas title to 44,000,000 acres of land and \$962,500,000 were transferred to Alaska Native people as a result of the land claims settlement under ANCSA, including—

(1) title to property in the clearly defined traditional homelands of Alaska Native people; and

(2) money to help compensate for the land Alaska Native people would not receive;

Whereas the purpose of the land claims settlement under ANCSA was to ensure the social and economic well-being of Alaska Native people without creating a lengthy wardship under the Federal Government;

Whereas ANCSA mandated—

(1) the creation of—

(A) 12 land-owning and for-profit Regional Corporations covering all of the State; and

(B) 1 non-land-owning Regional Corporation for non-residents of the State; and

(2) the incorporation of over 200 Village Corporations and Urban Corporations within each region of the State, either as for-profit or nonprofit corporations, with the land, assets, and businesses of those corporations to be owned by Native shareholders;

Whereas ANCSA redefined Alaska Native land ownership by conveying Native-owned fee simple title to the newly-created Native Corporations and, through those Corporations, to Alaska Native shareholders of each Corporation, rather than using the land own-

ership model used in the 48 contiguous States of designating reservations held in trust by the Federal Government;

Whereas, recognizing the uneven distribution of natural resources in the State among the 12 regions in the State, subsections (i) and (j) of section 7 of ANCSA (43 U.S.C. 1606) include provisions that reflect the Alaska Native values of sharing and cooperation;

Whereas, under section 7 of ANCSA (43 U.S.C. 1606)—

(1) 70 percent of the annual revenues of each land-owning Regional Corporation derived from the land of that Regional Corporation are required under subsection (i) of that section to be shared with all other Regional Corporations; and

(2) Regional Corporations are then required, under subsection (j) of that section, to share 50 percent of the revenues described in paragraph (1) with—

(A) the Village Corporations and Urban Corporations that are located in the same region as the applicable Regional Corporation; and

(B) the at-large shareholders of the applicable Regional Corporation;

Whereas each Regional Corporation, at times, has received more shared revenue under section 7(i) of ANCSA (43 U.S.C. 1606(i)) than internally produced revenue, demonstrating the importance of incorporating the Alaska Native values of sharing and cooperation into ANCSA;

Whereas, under ANCSA during the 50-year period preceding the date of adoption of this resolution, Alaska Native people have managed their land successfully, fostering sustainable businesses and creating employment opportunities for all Alaskans, Native and non-Native, and people across the United States and around the world;

Whereas ANCSA has benefitted all Alaskans—

(1) through diversifying the economy of the State; and

(2) by bringing revenue and expertise back to the State through Native Corporation business ventures in the national and international realms;

Whereas ANCSA has been amended by almost every Congress since the enactment of that Act in 1971, with some of the most significant and lasting amendments being enacted in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Amendments of 1987 (Public Law 100-241; 101 Stat. 1788) (commonly known as the "1991 amendments") (referred to in this preamble as the "1991 amendments");

Whereas among the provisions in the 1991 amendments was an extension of the prohibition on the sale of Native Corporation stock in perpetuity unless a majority of all shareholders of the applicable Native Corporation voted to remove that restriction, which—

(1) enabled shares to be held mostly by the Alaska Native people; and

(2) allowed Alaska Native people to pass that stock from 1 generation to the next and, as a result, increase the number of Alaska Native shareholders in a Native Corporation;

Whereas another provision in the 1991 amendments allowed shareholders of each Native Corporation to vote to include descendants of original shareholders born after the date of enactment of ANCSA to become shareholders regardless of date of birth;

Whereas the pioneering work of Alaska Native leaders of the mid-20th century created a lasting legacy of professional, personal, and historic economic success;

Whereas Alaska Native people have prospered from their own initiative and innovative approaches to fostering economic development through self-determination;

Whereas Alaska Native resiliency, leadership, and relentless work ethic have developed and supported some of the previously

most underserved regions in the United States into some of the most thriving, improving life expectancy and health conditions in those very regions;

Whereas subsequent to ANCSA ushering in the era of self-determination in Federal Indian policy, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.) (referred to in this preamble as the "ISDEAA") was enacted in 1975;

Whereas the ISDEAA defined Native Corporations as Indian Tribes for the purposes of that Act;

Whereas, because of the ISDEAA, federally recognized Alaska Native Tribes and Native Corporations have worked together to serve as providers for health, housing, and other Tribal services;

Whereas, beyond monetary benefits to shareholders, Native Corporations, through the structure and mandates of ANCSA, provide countless additional benefits, including—

- (1) scholarships;
- (2) burial and funeral assistance;
- (3) internships;
- (4) language revitalization programs;
- (5) careers; and
- (6) culture camps;

Whereas education has, and continues to be, a key focus for Regional Corporations, which is evidenced by the fact that all 12 land-owning Regional Corporations have—

- (1) education foundations to help support shareholders and descendants who want to advance their educational endeavors; and
- (2) as of the date of adoption of this resolution, awarded more than 54,000 individual scholarships;

Whereas Alaska Native people hold numerous positions of leadership in the State and beyond, inspiring younger generations of Alaskans;

Whereas further improvements to ANCSA must continue in order to fulfill all of the promises of ANCSA and all of the promises made by the Federal Government to Alaska Native people;

Whereas the dedication and enthusiasm of the next generations of Alaska Native leaders honors the previous generations of Alaska Native leaders who worked diligently to achieve the most significant Native land settlement in the history of the United States;

Whereas, with the adoption of Senate Resolution 351, 112th Congress, agreed to December 17, 2011, the Senate recognized the importance of ANCSA; and

Whereas the people of the United States have reason to honor the tremendous educational, social, political, economic, and cultural achievements of Alaska Native people over the past 50 years: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

- (1) recognizes December 18, 2021, as the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) (referred to in this resolution as "ANCSA");

- (2) commemorates the extensive achievements made by Alaska Native people through the implementation of ANCSA, while simultaneously maintaining their culture, traditions, and ways of life, during the 50-year period preceding the date of adoption of this resolution; and

- (3) celebrates the successes of Alaska Native people during that 50-year period, with optimism for the next 50 years and beyond.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I mentioned that I came to the floor to speak about a significant matter for Alaska. It is a significant milestone for my State. Just 2 days from now, on December 18, we will mark the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act being signed into law by President Nixon back in 1971.

For those who are not familiar with Alaska's history, ANCSA, as we call it, is one of the foundational laws for my State. It settled aboriginal land names. It chartered hundreds of Alaska Native corporations to own lands and to empower their Alaska Native shareholders.

Now, this structure is very unique. I think most of us think about a corporation and you think about an IBM or a General Electric, but an Alaska Native corporation and the shareholders who are part of them are very, very different from the corporate structure that most know.

This approach that was arrived at with the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was new. It was a clear, clear departure from the reservation model in the lower 48. It ushered in a new level of economic self-determination through private land ownership.

Alaska Native leaders took a look at the reservation system that was throughout other parts of America, and in most of them—not all, but most of them—decided on another path, saying: That is not the route that we would take.

They wanted to manage their lands, manage their resources on their own terms, and to have greater economic prosperity and independence.

So in Alaska, we have 229 Tribes in the State, and, as someone who comes from a State where you do have many Tribes, I think it always gets people's attention when I say we have about 40 percent of the Tribes in the Nation that are located in Alaska.

ANCSA established more than 200 village corporations along with regional and urban corporations. And under this settlement, Congress transferred some 44 million acres of land in Alaska to the private ownership of these newly created corporations. They also appropriated \$962 million in compensation. So there was the transfer of ownership, as well as the conveyance of dollars.

So as shareholders, the Alaska Native people would then be able to decide for themselves how to use, how to protect, and how to guide development of their lands and their resources. As Marlene Johnson put it, ANCSA meant that Alaska Natives "were able to surround and put their arms around the land that belonged to their forefathers and will belong to their grandkids," and she said, "That is really important." It really is.

Today the economic success of ANCSA is as self-evident as it is self-determined. ANCSA has positively impacted not just Alaska Native people but Alaska as a whole. ANCs, as we call them, have become key economic drivers, creating jobs and industry in Alaska but also across the country and even around the globe.

ANCs consistently rank as the top 10 Alaska-owned businesses by gross revenue, and many of the largest office buildings and employers in Anchorage and Fairbanks and Juneau are home to ANCs.

They also provide important services for their people, like scholarships and cultural stewardship, often through their nonprofit foundations. Because of ANCSA, significant investments have been made in real estate, construction, tourism, workforce development, professional services, and so much more.

We have also seen the very clear benefit of resource development. We see this up in the NANA region with the Red Dog Mine. We are hoping that can be replicated at prospects like Donlin Gold in the Calista region. Revenue sharing—very, very unique within ANCSA—revenue sharing with village corporations and leadership in the area of cultural resource protection—we see that down in the southeast region. These are just a few of the examples of where ANCSA really got it right.

As we look back at ANCSA, we recognize that there were many, many people who helped to make it happen—not just President Nixon, as I mentioned, the congressional delegation, of course, but more importantly, the many strong Alaska Native leaders, like Emil Notti, Etok Edwardsen, and John Borbridge, among many, many others.

We are fortunate that some of the key ANCSA advocates are still with us today, but, sadly, many of the visionary leaders who were so instrumental in the negotiations have passed on, and there are far too many to mention here, but I will share the story of one of them.

Don Wright, this individual right here, was born in Nenana back in 1929. He is shown here with Ted Stevens, over to the right. This is Don's wife Carol, and this is the Senator from Vermont, Senator Stafford.

Don was known for his charisma and his skill as a negotiator and a political leader. Many Alaska Natives at the time were just very, very personally invested in this effort, and he was one who really led in this. He personally contributed to the advocacy effort, both in time and money. Don led that, along with others.

He and others spent nights sleeping on the streets here in Washington, DC, or in the Halls of Congress. They maxed out credit cards to pay for the long trips all the way from Alaska to come here to DC to the Capitol. Don once paid the way for 20 Alaskans to travel with him to lobby for the legislation. He was really all in. He fought tirelessly to secure Native land rights.

He was president of the Alaska Federation of Natives when ANCSA actually became law. He was able to meet with President Nixon in 1971 to encourage passage of the bill and was truly a driving force behind the effort.

He framed it well by saying that year:

The President and the Congress must decide whether this last chapter is to be written in dignity or dishonor.

I think, thanks to Don Wright and many other Native leaders, it was written in dignity.

I am really very, very humbled by all of the incredible people who helped

shape ANCSA, many of whom I am fortunate to know and to call my friends. It is a privilege to be able to honor and thank them here on the Senate floor for their fortitude, their determination, and their perseverance.

I remain unwavering in my commitment to help today's leaders as we continue to improve ANCSA and ensure that the Federal Government upholds its promise to Alaska Native people.

Now, we say around here all the time that there is no law that we have written and passed that is perfect, and ANCSA is certainly no exception. It is really a living document, if you will, still changing, still evolving. There are gaps; we recognize that. There are shortcomings, and we still have unfinished business, important issues that we have to resolve. One of these is recent, unfortunately, and it does not involve amending ANCSA, but, instead, it calls for flexibility for the unique corporations it created.

After the COVID pandemic struck our country, those of us in Congress came together. We were seeking to pass the CARES Act to provide relief across the spectrum. As part of that—and I was really very pleased to be able to be part of that effort that was able to dedicate significant funding for Tribes and Tribal entities. It was \$8 billion that was dedicated for Tribes, Tribal entities, including ANCs.

But ANCs' eligibility for that funding was quickly challenged despite the very clear intention here in Congress. The case ultimately went to the Supreme Court. It wasn't decided until June 25 of this year, when they ultimately prevailed.

As a result of that litigation, ANCs received their allocations under that CARES funding, but they only recently received this. So they got the litigation through, and they received their allocation but very late. But now we have a new problem. The new problem is, that CARES Act money needs to be spent by December 31—a matter of a couple weeks. That is just not right. That is not fair here. It is clearly not long enough to be able to responsibly utilize these very important funds, and it is really not fair as a result of the litigation they faced.

So the congressional delegation—Senator SULLIVAN, Congressman YOUNG, and I—is seeking to extend the deadline through the end of next year. We are basically saying: Look, fair is fair. ANCs should have the time that they need and that others had.

While the Senate has agreed to pass a broader bill that includes this extension, it is stalled over on the House side and really has left us with no clear path forward, even at this very late hour. So that is something I am asking my colleagues and the administration for their support on in gaining this flexibility.

Another top priority for me is something that was left out of ANCSA all those years ago. Five communities in Southeast Alaska were missing from

its text and therefore unable to create what we call urban corporations. Today, this is a 50-year injustice for these five Alaska Native communities of Haines, Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, and Tenakee. I have had the privilege to live in Wrangell and to be born in Ketchikan, so these are communities that are pretty close to my heart.

The situation in terms of being left out was challenging enough. It is not made easier by their location in the Tongass National Forest. But I would remind the Senate that they and their ancestors lived in this area. They took care of these lands long before the Federal Government came along and made the designation of a national forest.

That nearly all of their region has since been taken and classified as a Federal forest is no reason to refuse to acknowledge and work with us on this. So I have recently reintroduced legislation to allow those five southeast communities to receive their rightful land entitlements under ANCSA.

I would urge my colleagues, take a look at this. Recognize that this is a matter of the Federal Government making good on its promise to thousands of Alaska Natives. I would ask that you would join me and Senator SULLIVAN and Congressman YOUNG as we work to advance this bill into law, as we, again, continue to address unfulfilled promises within ANCSA.

A third matter is a provision in ANCSA that, quite honestly, is just outdated, no longer needed.

Congress, in trying to do the right thing, required village corporations to take a portion of the lands they received under ANCSA and give them to the State of Alaska to hold in trust for future community needs.

Fast-forward some 50 years, and many of these lands are simply being held in trust now even though they are not needed for municipal purposes and quite likely will never be. It is just time to end that requirement and enable the village corporations to receive these lands back if they so choose.

We also have to remember that this is a land settlement, but it is not fully implemented. Keep in mind—it has been 50 years now. It is a land settlement that hasn't been implemented fully after 50 years. A total of 5.5 million acres are still under interim conveyance, and another 1.5 million acres remain unconveyed from the original entitlement.

We have to provide the resources to the Department of the Interior to complete this very important work.

There are at least four more issues that we need to help resolve as well that I will mention.

The first here on this list is really concerning to me, and it is actually really very devastating when you think about it. This is the matter of contaminated lands. This problem is not only not going away, it is getting worse.

It really pains me to say, but significant lands in Alaska, including for-

merly used defense sites, were contaminated. The Federal Government knew they were contaminated, but they were still conveyed to the ANCs as contaminated lands, and the government is saying: OK. This is part of your land settlement. We are going to give you these lands, but you can't use these lands because they are contaminated.

There are horrible consequences that we are seeing to this. We have clusters of illnesses, cancer. I just had a report that was presented to the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention just this past week. This is causing real suffering, true consequences, death in these communities.

It is no fault of the people who live there and received these lands in settlement from the Federal Government. It is a Federal responsibility for us to take care of this, so we have a plan we have—we have a plan in the sense that we have identified where these contaminated lands are, but what we need is a comprehensive plan in terms of the action, what we are actually going to do to clean up the land and make it right and make it right as soon as possible.

Another issue that we need to resolve is the issue of "afterborns."

The day that ANCSA became law, December 18, 1971, was kind of an arbitrary deadline, if you will, for Alaska Native people to be included in its benefits. So if a Native person was alive on the date of enactment, December 18, 1971, they were included as an eligible shareholder in the ANCSA corporation that aligned with their traditional Tribal homelands. But if a Native person, even from the same family—same area, same family—if they were born after December 18, 1971, they were not included, and they did not receive shares in any Native corporation. So what you had, you created two distinct classes of Native people. You had original shareholders and nonshareholder descendants—they call them afterborns—who were effectively disenfranchised from the benefits that Congress intended for them.

There was a past amendment to ANCSA that dealt directly with this issue but didn't sufficiently solve this problem. This was an effort that we advanced several years ago, a decade or so. Congress has allowed ANCSA corporations to open enrollment to descendants through an affirmative vote of their current shareholders. As a result, what we have seen is that about 5 regional corporations have opened enrollment, and about 5 of the more than 200 village corporations have done the same. Unfortunately, so many of these small village corporations that want to open enrollment simply can't afford this process. It is a relatively complicated process.

This is a problem that we are probably going to have to address legislatively—not by directing Alaska Natives on what to do but by providing some support and resources so that

they can make that choice at their discretion.

One of the more significant promises made to Alaska Native people dealt with the issue of subsistence.

In Alaska, subsistence is hunting, it is fishing, and it is gathering. It is inextricably tied to Native culture. It is food security for places where grocery stores simply don't exist, or if they do exist, the food is so expensive that the average family can't afford it. So this is, again, something where we need to find fair solutions for Alaska Native subsistence rights.

The last issue I will bring up today is something too significant not to acknowledge. ANCSA was meant to be a fair and just settlement, accomplished rapidly, with certainty and in conformity with the real economic and social needs of Native people without litigation. Congress wrote that into ANCSA itself. Yet, in reality, ANCSA severed Alaska Tribes from the Tribal land base.

While many Alaska Native people are owners in Native corporations that manage Native traditional homelands, Alaska Tribal governments were not a consideration in the law. Alaska Tribes, whose collective aboriginal land rights led to the creation of ANCSA, were left without a viable resource stream to effectively govern. They, too, need tools and resources to create opportunities, and that is also an issue that we must consider in going forward.

But all of this—all of this—requires education and understanding. That is going to be key, and that has been, unfortunately, lacking—severely lacking—as we have seen, repeatedly, misguided attacks from Members here in Congress against ANCSA and its corporations. I will tell you, it is hard to express how frustrating that is, how infuriating these attacks truly are. But one additional benefit of this 50th anniversary is the opportunity that it provides us to help Congress, to help the administration, to help, really, the American public understand ANCSA and the promises that were made within that settlement act.

Alaska Pacific University and the Wilson Center's Polar Institute have held a series of events that are free for anyone who wants to learn and understand more about ANCSA. The Ted Stevens Foundation is developing a documentary on this. *Indian Country Today*, *First Alaskans* magazine, *Alaska Public Media*, and the *Anchorage Daily News*, among others, have all published long-form articles, exploring ANCSA's history, its meaning, its impacts, and its future. So I would encourage folks to take a look at that.

I think it is also important to remember that, while ANCSA's passage ushered in a period of self-determination and self-governance for Alaska Native communities, it provided opportunities for these communities to really look to the future. In short, ANCSA was designed to address the past by looking to the future.

At the annual meeting of the Alaska Federation of Natives, which, I mentioned, just took place earlier this week, I reflected and recognized the generation of Alaska Native leaders who fought for the passage of ANCSA. It was their efforts that helped pave the way for the many Alaska Native youth who may be watching back in Alaska, across the country, and maybe even around the world. I want them to know about the work that was done to pass this historic law and how it is appreciated. As I reflect here today on the passage of this important law, I am hopeful about what ANCSA will represent for our Alaska Native youth in the future.

My colleague Senator SULLIVAN and I have introduced a resolution to ensure that the U.S. Senate recognizes the 50th anniversary of ANCSA. Our resolution acknowledges the incredible accomplishments that Alaska Native people have made through their ANCs over these past 50 years. There are many successes to acknowledge and to celebrate, but in its text, we also reflect on the work that is left ahead and the promises left unfilled—the promises the Federal Government has made to Alaska Native people that must be honored.

So I thank Senator SULLIVAN for standing with me to submit this important resolution, which acknowledges the tenacity of the Alaska Native people and the success of ANCs over the past 50 years. I know that the dean of the House, Congressman YOUNG, joins with us in acknowledging this golden anniversary.

I would certainly encourage all of those who have had an opportunity to hear my comments—I know my colleague Senator SULLIVAN is going to speak later as well—to just take a bit of time to better understand this foundational law for Alaska Natives' self-determination.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, today I introduced a resolution with Senator MURKOWSKI celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act—ANCSA, as we call it back home in Alaska—which was an enormously consequential piece of legislation that, after years and years of debate right in this body, passed the House, then passed the U.S. Senate, and then was signed into law by President Nixon on December 18, 1971, almost exactly 50 years ago to this day. It was a great day for Alaska.

I know Senator MURKOWSKI was on the floor earlier talking about ANCSA and why it is so important and why in Alaska, right now, we have been celebrating 50 years of this important piece of legislation.

I want to go back in time a little bit to help explain, because part of what Senator MURKOWSKI and I do here is we are constantly talking about and educating our colleagues about this very unique legislation, which happened right here in the U.S. Senate.

If you go back in time to 1867, that is when the United States purchased

Alaska from Russia. Within the agreement, there was acknowledgement of the Alaska Native people and their lands, but, still, almost 100 years after the purchase from Russia, even following statehood for Alaska, the claims settlement that the Native people had to their own lands was still in limbo.

It got a kick and a turbo charge when oil was discovered on Alaska's North Slope during a worldwide shortage, which created new urgency to develop Alaska for our resources but to do so by settling these land claims.

There were allies in the Federal Government who were helpful, but it was truly the Alaska Native people and their determination to themselves and to future generations and their resiliency and brilliance which led to the passage of ANCSA 50 years ago, which became the largest and, certainly, most innovative indigenous land settlement, certainly, in U.S. history, and it is no exaggeration to say probably in the world—44 million acres of land going to the Native people of my State.

It brought tremendous educational, social, political, economic, and cultural achievements for the Alaska Native people. It certainly wasn't perfect, but this body played a very important role.

Now, there were obstacles, challenges. In fact, when you look back on the history over 50 years ago, it was kind of a classic David-and-Goliath story.

Let me spend a few minutes going back in time to set the stage for what was happening in Alaska.

In 1954, the U.S. Department of the Interior did a health survey on the Native people of Alaska. Here is a quote from that survey: "The indigenous people of Native Alaska are the victims of sickness, crippling conditions and premature death to a degree exceeded in very few parts of the world. . . . health problems are nearly out of hand. If . . . Americans could see for themselves the large numbers of the tuberculosis, the cripple, the blind . . . the malnourished, the desperately ill among [this] relatively small [Native] population," it would have a profound impact on them. And it did.

Even in the face of these crippling conditions, the Alaska Native people joined hands, joined hearts and said: This is our land. We need rights to it.

They did this by coming together. In the mid-1960s, they formed the Alaska Federation of Natives—AFN, as we call it back home—an entity that is very important to our communities.

Of course, the Native people in our State looked for potential allies. In the lower 48, they gave speeches. They wrote columns. They formed their own newspaper, *The Tundra Times*, edited by legendary Howard Rock, which was highly read throughout the State, celebrated throughout the globe, and had an enormous impact on bringing people together.

A few years ago, my team and I combed through some of the hearings

that led to ANCSA. It was many years in development. There were field hearings that took place in Alaska in 1968, 1969—3 years before the passage of ANCSA.

Incredibly proud and determined first peoples from all over the State—Tlingit, Haida, Athabascan, Inupiat, Yupik, Aleut—travel to Anchorage, to Fairbanks to give their testimony in field hearings to U.S. Senators. Some of them had never even left their villages. Some of them didn't even speak English.

Many were veterans—and I am going to talk briefly about that. Dozens and dozens of young men and women, old men and women, all of them testifying before U.S. Senators and Congressmen, telling their stories of how they lived off the land and the rights that they needed for thousands of years on the land.

They told stories of strong and resilient people who had been able to thrive in some of the harshest conditions in the planet. But as I mentioned earlier, they also told stories of health challenges.

The first AFN president, Emil Notti, who is still a great leader in Alaska, then only 36 years old, spoke with passion at these hearings and heartbreak about the conditions in rural Alaska.

He said to a group of Senators in a hearing:

The indigenous people of Native Alaska are the victims of sickness, crippling conditions and premature death to a degree exceeded in very few parts of the world.

He told the committee then that life expectancy for the average Native Alaskan was 34 years old. This is in the late 1960s. The average life expectancy in the United States at that time was 69—34 years old to 69.

Many spoke of how much they had sacrificed for their country. And this is an issue I never tire of talking about. Alaska Natives serve at higher rates in the U.S. military than any other ethnic group in the country. So they are fighting for their country in World War II and Korea and Vietnam, and they are coming home and they are being denied fundamental rights themselves.

Here is what Jerome Trigg, a leader and a marine from Nome, had to tell U.S. Senators who were in Alaska. His testimony was said to have brought tears to the eyes of many. He looked at the U.S. Senators and said this: We have showed our patriotism as proudly as any Americans on Earth. We have answered the call of duty with pride in serving in our military. In World War II, we answered the call 100 percent. Every man—old and young—in every village volunteered with the Alaska National Guard.

On Vietnam, which was raging at the time, he said: I have never heard of an Alaska Native burning their draft card or our Nation's flag. We love our land, and we will sacrifice and fight to protect it.

He concluded with this thought, which I love: "Sometimes I think the

wrong people are running this hearing and taking our testimony," he said to the Senators. "It seems that [maybe] we should be on the bench and you people should be . . . giving [us] the testimony."

I love that—strong words from Marine Jerome Trigg, who had a very important point to make.

So many in our communities testified in front of Congress. One happened to be a beautiful, young Alaska Native woman in her thirties from the village of Rampart named Mary Jane Fate, who not only worked on this but came to Washington, DC, to lobby U.S. Senators to pass ANCSA. I had the very great privilege of being the son-in-law of that great Native woman who, unfortunately, passed away recently. That was my mother-in-law, Mary Jane Fate, who came to this body and made sure Senators understood what was happening in Alaska and got them to vote for ANCSA 50 years ago.

So here is what it did in a nutshell. As I mentioned, it was the largest indigenous land settlement in the history of the country: 44 million acres of land, almost a billion dollars from the State and Federal Government to transfer land in fee simple—not the reservation system like you have in the lower 48, which was a huge innovation at the time. They own this land. It is theirs. It is not held in trust by the United States like it is in the lower 48 on Indian reservations.

Congress mandated the creation of for-profit Alaska Native corporations solely owned by Alaska Native shareholders. Twelve of these regional corporations and 200 village ANCs were created by the Congress. Sometimes people talk about ANCs as if they were some foreign entity. They were actually created right here 50 years ago.

What did all of this do? It provided economic opportunity. These were not typical entities, but they were more than just corporations. They were kind of a combination: social, cultural, economic. They passed on the values to the different shareholders.

One of the great things about ANCSA was that it required, actually, the sharing of revenues. Some of these regional corporations did very well; others didn't. There were provisions early on that said, if these corporations are doing great and these aren't, there is going to be some sharing. It was called the 7(i) provision. These provisions have been critical to the survival of ANCs, which regional ANCs at times, as I mentioned, were receiving more revenue than others.

So that day 50 years ago—December 18, 1971—was really an important day for our State. How has it worked out? It has worked out well, but, of course, we always have more work to do.

Over the last 50 years, the Alaska Native people have managed their lands to foster sustainable businesses, created employment opportunities for all people—Native and non-Native—in Alaska, across the country, and across

the globe. They have become the heart and soul of our economy in Alaska, employing thousands of both Alaska Native and non-Native people.

And they have prospered with their own initiative and with innovative approaches to fostering economic development through self-determination. And beyond the economic benefits, these ANCs, these groupings, these shareholders in these Alaska Native entities created right here on this floor, provided benefits in terms of culture, language revitalization, scholarships, burials, funeral assistance, and an enormous focus on education. Over 54,000 individual scholarships were given to younger Alaska Native people.

And, importantly, this law, passed by this body, gave the Native people the opportunity to thrive; to continue to live on their land, practice their culture, create leaders throughout the State. In what was once one of the most impoverished places in the country are now, in many areas, strong, dynamic—health, education, housing, food security, and sanitation have all improved immensely.

We have a long way to go. There is still a lot of misunderstanding. In Alaska, you have Tribes, Tribal members, you have ANCs, and shareholders. These are the Native people. You have crossover. And sometimes there is a misunderstanding.

For example, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act specifically excluded tens of thousands of Alaska Natives because they were members of an organization that Congress created. My own view was that was outrageous.

So that is why we need to keep educating our colleagues here. But overall, this was a story of success, of resilience, of what can happen when you allow people to take charge of their own destiny. It is a story of self-determination and, in many ways, heroism, and it is a story for the ages.

I am honored to represent these people, wonderful people—many of whom the leaders are still alive who made this happen 50 years ago—and their children and grandchildren. We have more work to do, but 50 years ago, on December 18, 1971, it was the start of a new, positive, innovative chapter in the history of Alaska. And that is why Senator MURKOWSKI and I wanted to celebrate this very important milestone this afternoon.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have 3 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate: